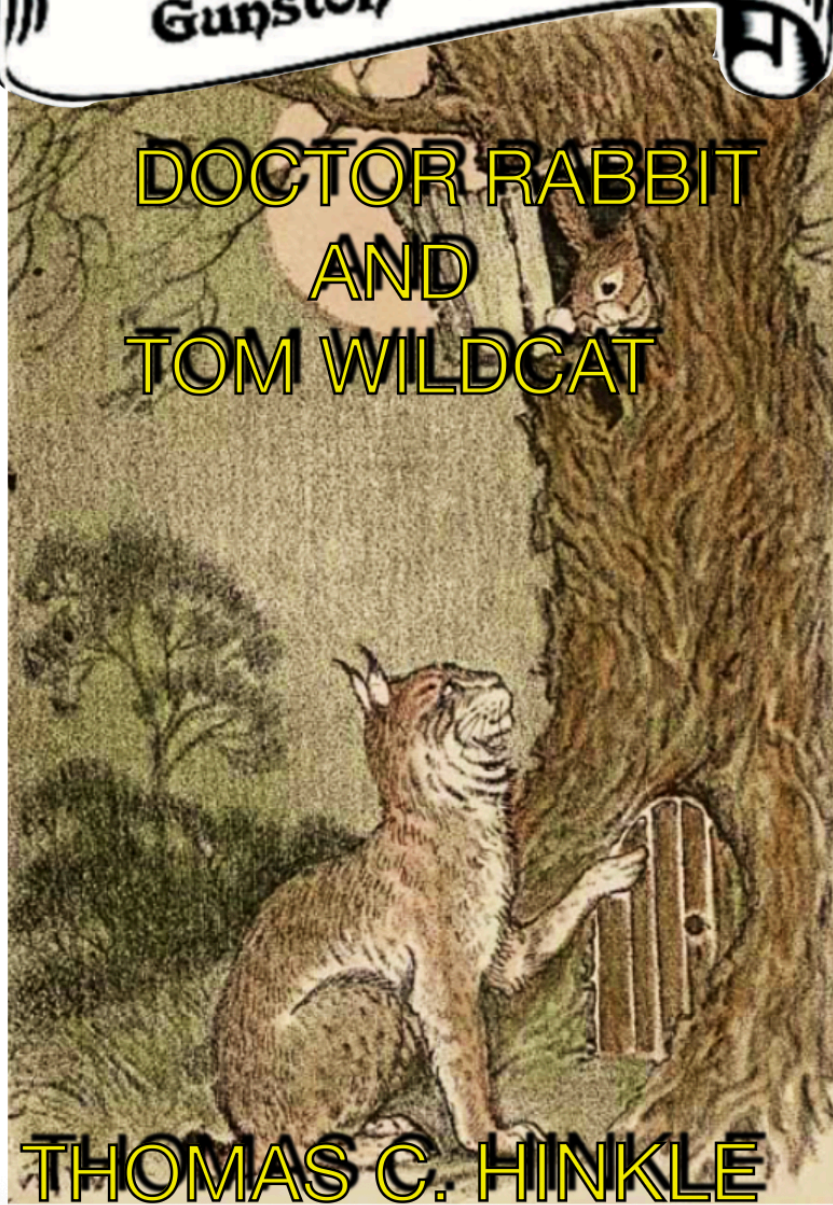


Gunston Classics

DOCTOR RABBIT
AND
TOM WILDCAT

THOMAS C. HINKLE



Gunston & The Book Bunnies



The Gunston Trust

**DOCTOR RABBIT
AND
TOM WILDCAT**

By THOMAS CLARK HINKLE

Illustrated by Milo Winter

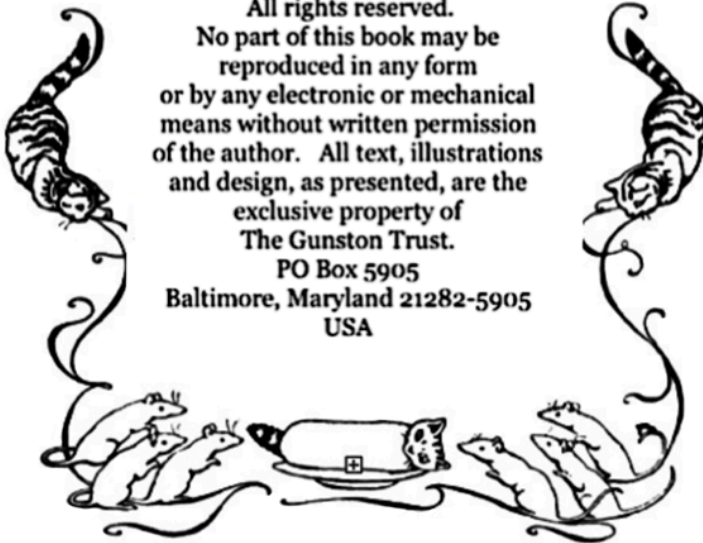


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Nonviolence
In Children's Literature

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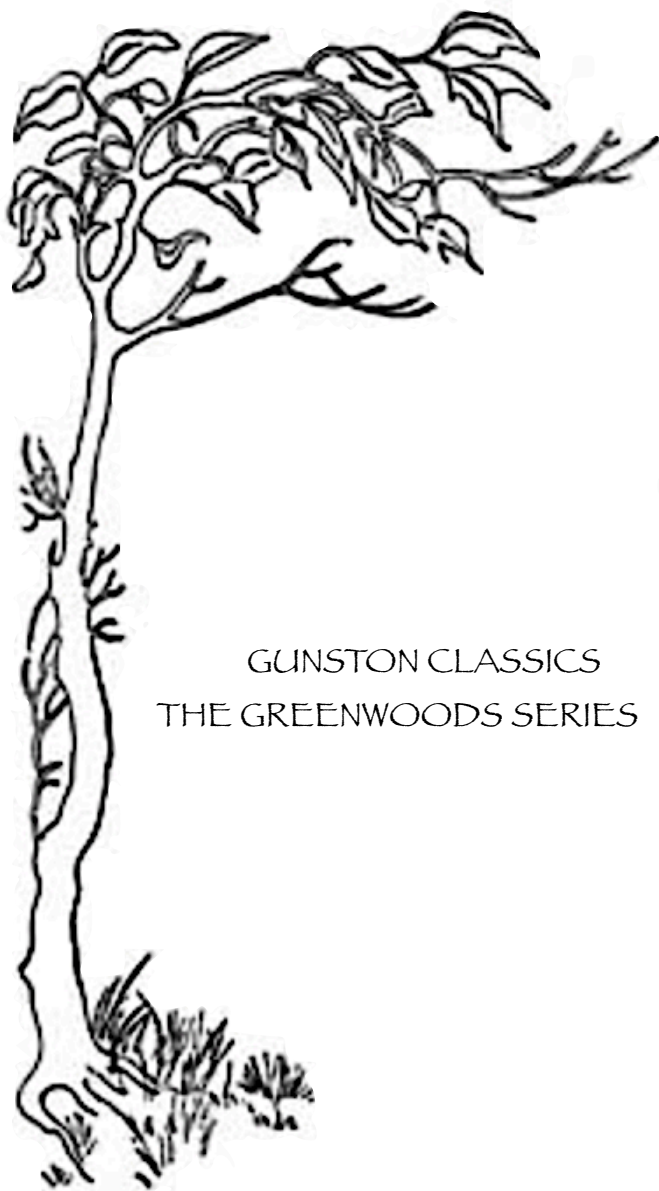
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GUNSTON CLASSICS
THE GREENWOODS SERIES



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THE ILLUSTRATIONS

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Crash! he went right through. . .into that deep hole!

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"I have a plan, Mrs. Woodchuck"

All the little creatures hurried out to watch him

"What do you want at my house this time o' night?"





“What do you want at my house
this time o’night?”



DOCTOR RABBIT
AND
TOM WILDCAT



AN UNWELCOME CALLER

Rap! rap! rap! It was past midnight and some one was knocking on Doctor Rabbit's door. Doctor Rabbit growled a little, for he did not like to be wakened that time of night even if he was a doctor. But he got up anyway and opened the upstairs window in his big tree.



The big round moon was shining very bright. It shone quite clear on the one who was knocking at the door. Now, who do you suppose it was? Well, it was some one Doctor Rabbit didn't want to see. I should say he didn't! For it was Tom Wildcat knocking! And he was about the worst enemy Doctor Rabbit had in the Big Green Woods. So it was a mighty good thing he didn't go down and open his front door.

"What do you want at my house this time o' night?" Doctor Rabbit called down sharply.

Tom Wildcat jumped back a little, he was so surprised to hear some one talking above him.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, looking up. "How do you do, Doctor Rabbit? I just came over to have you put some salve on my hind foot. I hurt it pretty bad a while ago."

Now Doctor Rabbit didn't believe old Tom. So he said, "Well, that doesn't interest me, but how did you hurt it?"

"Well," said Tom Wildcat, "I stepped on something in the dark—a sticker or something.



Then all of a sudden I found my foot bleeding and mighty sore.”

Doctor Rabbit knew very well how very cunning Tom was, so he spoke right up and said,

“If you don’t tell me the real truth I won’t look at your foot at all.”

That was pretty plain and Tom Wildcat saw there was no other way but to tell the truth.

“Well,” he said, “the fact is I was borrowing a hen from Farmer Roe’s chicken house, and his big dog and I had a little trouble before I could get away.”

“Aha, I see,” said Doctor Rabbit, peering slyly down at Tom and looking very wise. “Well, I’ll just shut my window and you can come up. You’ll find a small hole under the window. Put your foot through it and I’ll look at it.” Then Doctor Rabbit shut the window, locked it, and sat down to wait.

Tom grumbled more than a little about having to climb the tree with his sore foot, but as there was no other way he began pulling and clawing into the bark, and up he went. Every now and then he hurt his foot against the tree and



would have to stop. This made him pretty mad. But by and by he got up to the window and there he stopped to rest a bit and get his breath.

Then he looked at the hole under the window and called out, "What are you going to do with my foot?"

"Why, how can I tell till I see it?" Doctor Rabbit called back. And all the while he was chuckling so much he was afraid Tom might hear.

After thinking it over Tom had decided that perhaps he could put his foot through the hole and at the same time look through the window and see what Doctor Rabbit was doing. But there was no way he could do this. So he turned round with his head down and held on to the bark of the tree while he put his foot through the hole under the window.

Doctor Rabbit saw right away that Tom Wildcat's foot really was sore, but it wasn't very bad. So chuckling more than ever, he went to his medicine closet and got out a box of salve. It was what Doctor Rabbit called his hot medicine, and it certainly was hot. It would cure a sore foot all



right, but Doctor Rabbit didn't use it very often. He kept it only for some one like his present patient.

"Hurry up!" Tom called out most impatiently.

Doctor Rabbit was all ready, so he called back, "All right there, Tom; hold right still!" and slapped a lot of that hot salve right on the sore foot, just where it hurt the most.

Old Tom gave a yell loud enough to be heard all over the Big Green Woods, and down the tree he went.

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DOCTOR RABBIT DISCOVERS A SECRET

When Tom Wildcat reached the ground he was pretty mad. Doctor Rabbit opened his window again and called down to him. “That salve is pretty hot, I’m afraid, but I’m quite sure it’ll cure your foot. Yes, sir, it’s pretty hot, but it’s just the right kind of salve for a wildcat!”

“Well, maybe it is,” growled Tom Wildcat between his teeth. Then, thinking perhaps the salve would cure his foot and that by and by he might deceive Doctor Rabbit, he added, in a very pleasant tone, “I’m very much obliged to you, Doctor Rabbit. Good night!”

“Good night to you, Tom,” Doctor Rabbit said, still chuckling to himself as he closed his window and locked it.



Doctor Rabbit was wide awake now and did not care to go back to bed. So he put on his light coat and soft slippers and sat down in his big rocking chair. Then he had a good laugh when he thought of the way Tom Wildcat yelped as he went down the tree.

But pretty soon Doctor Rabbit stopped rocking and sat up very straight and listened. Yes, sir! There was some one mumbling in the little thicket near his back door. Doctor Rabbit got up and quietly slipped down his stairway. He crept close to his kitchen door and listened. It was just as he thought. Tom Wildcat was out there, talking and laughing to himself.

He was saying, "My foot surely does burn but I know it's going to be better." After a minute he went on, "I believe I'll rest here a little. I might just as well. Ha, ha, ha! That fat old Doctor Rabbit is in bed sleeping his head off. He thinks he's pretty cunning, but he's not half as cunning as I am. Ha! ha! ha! I should say not. Yes, I'll just rest here for a bit and think about the really, truly



great dinner I'm going to have. Jack Rabbit surely will make a fine one. Indeed he will!"

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DOCTOR RABBIT KEEPS STILL AND LISTENS

When Doctor Rabbit heard Tom Wildcat say he was going to have his friend Jack Rabbit for dinner, he listened with all his ears to hear, if possible, how Tom expected to catch poor innocent Jack Rabbit. The wily Tom, thinking Doctor Rabbit was asleep, kept right on talking.

“It’s mighty lucky,” he said, “that I found where Jack Rabbit takes his nap. Ha! ha! ha! Right under the big sycamore tree. It will be as easy as anything to catch him. Along about noon he’ll be asleep there, and I’ll just creep up behind that big tree. Then I’ll slip up into the tree and walk out on that long limb, right over him; and then, kerplunk! I’ll pounce down on him.

Yum! yum! yum! I can almost taste him now! I’ll hurry home this minute and see that Kit Wildcat



has the water boiling and everything ready. By dinner time I'll be as hungry as a bear!"

"Ouch!" Tom Wildcat suddenly cried out, and then he said, "Whew!" softly. You see, he had licked his sore foot and the salve burned his tongue. "That salve is certainly hot," he said; but as he was thinking about fat Jack Rabbit he didn't even complain. He was feeling pretty good again, and he went slipping along through the moonlit woods toward his home. Every now and then a twig or a vine brushed against his long whiskers and he turned aside quickly. Tom Wildcat's whiskers help him a great deal after dark. They often protect his eyes from sticks and briars and tell him when a hole is big enough to go through.

When slinky Tom had got a little distance away, Doctor Rabbit opened the door just enough so that he could peek out. Tom Wildcat would creep along a little distance, then stop and listen and look all around. Once he crawled close to the ground and made a sudden spring. Jack Rabbit gave a great jump and came very near being caught, but he darted away just in the nick



of time. Tom stood for a moment jerking his tail from side to side and muttering his disappointment; then trotted out of sight among the shadows.

Doctor Rabbit closed the door and went back to his big rocking chair. He could scarcely wait until daylight to run over and warn his friend Jack Rabbit. Doctor Rabbit knew well enough that there was a nice sunny spot under the big sycamore tree at the edge of the Big Green Woods, and he knew Jack Rabbit often stretched out to sun himself there after he had eaten some of the tender blue grass. The fact was, Doctor Rabbit himself had stretched out there a number of times.

Doctor Rabbit didn't even wait to get breakfast. Just as soon as it began to be daylight he started through the woods to see Jack Rabbit, out on the Wide Prairie. "I certainly hope I shall find Friend Jack at home," Doctor Rabbit said as he hurried along.



Mr. Jack Rabbit...came very
near being caught



DOCTOR RABBIT SPEAKS TO JACK RABBIT

It was a pretty long distance from Doctor Rabbit's home in the big tree to Jack Rabbit's home out in the Wide Prairie. As Doctor Rabbit went along through the Big Green Woods, he moved watchful-like, because he thought Tom Wildcat might be prowling around almost anywhere. When there was a nice open glade in the woods, Doctor Rabbit went hoppity, hoppity, hoppity, as fast as his legs would carry him, and he held his ears flat to his head, too, for that's the way Doctor Rabbit and all other rabbits hold their ears when they run very fast. Then he would stop and prick up his ears and listen for the least sound.

Presently he met Blue Jay.



“Good morning, Doctor Rabbit!” Blue Jay cried out, a great deal louder than Doctor Rabbit wished him to.

Doctor Rabbit said softly, “Sh! Good morning, Blue Jay. But not so loud! Tom Wildcat might—”

“Where is he?” Blue Jay asked, and his voice trembled with fear and anger.

“Sh!” Doctor Rabbit warned again. “I don’t know just exactly where he is now but he was prowling around my house last night, and—”

“And yesterday,” poor Blue Jay interrupted, “he was prowling around my house. I came home just in time to hear Jenny Jay screaming her loudest because he had nearly caught her. And then what do you suppose he did? He ate every egg we had in our nest! We wanted to peck his eyes out, but we didn’t dare to get close enough. We’re rebuilding a new nest in another tree now, and I’m watching for Tom Wildcat every minute. I just want to tell him what I think of him!”



“Don’t talk so loud, please, Blue Jay,” Doctor Rabbit said again, in a low voice. “He might be around close, and I don’t want him to see me, especially just at this time. I’m on my way to see Jack Rabbit on very important business. Now, Blue Jay, slip around as quick as you can and tell Stubby Woodchuck and Cheepy Chipmunk, and our other friends, that Tom Wildcat is in the Big Green Woods again, and very hungry, too. I have thought of a way to get rid of him, perhaps; but first I shall have to see whether my plan works out.” And without taking time to say another word, Doctor Rabbit hurried away through the woods toward Jack Rabbit’s home.

Blue Jay flew straight to the stump where Stubby Woodchuck lived and told him to look out for Tom Wildcat; then he went around and told Cheepy Chipmunk, and Robin-the-Red, and Chatty Red Squirrel. They told their neighbors, so that in a little time they all were talking and thinking about Tom Wildcat. You see, all the little creatures of the Big Green Woods are dreadfully afraid of old Tom Wildcat, because not only can



he spring quickly on the ground, but he can climb trees very swiftly.

Tom Wildcat lived in a very large cottonwood tree over by the Deep River. He prowled around over there, eating whatever he could find. Sometimes he caught a fish at the edge of Deep River, and now and then he caught a hen that wandered down along the bank. He was satisfied with such things for a time, but every now and then he slipped into the Big Green Woods. All the little woods creatures said they surely hoped that plan of Doctor Rabbit's, whatever it was, would get rid of Tom Wildcat, for they both feared and hated him.



FOOLING TOM WILDCAT

Now it so happened that Jack Rabbit came over for an early breakfast of tender blue grass, and he met Doctor Rabbit just at the edge of the woods. Doctor Rabbit was certainly glad of this, because it was pretty dangerous for him to go far out on the Wide Prairie.

Of course Jack Rabbit was very much alarmed when Doctor Rabbit told him Tom Wildcat had planned to eat him.

“My goodness!” was all poor Jack Rabbit could say.

“Now listen!” Doctor Rabbit said. “I’ve a little scheme.” And then to make very sure that no one else heard, he went up close to Jack Rabbit



and whispered in his ear for a time. Then they both laughed and danced a jig.

“Doctor Rabbit, you’re surely the smartest rabbit that ever was!” Jack Rabbit complimented his good friend.

Doctor Rabbit said they would have to hurry now, and they went straight to the big sycamore tree where Jack Rabbit generally lay down to sun himself.

There was a deep, wide hole under this tree, that Farmer Roe’s boy had dug for a playhouse a good while ago. Doctor Rabbit and his friend Jack Rabbit began gathering long, slim, dead sticks and laying them across this hole. All the time they kept laughing to themselves. The sticks were pretty rotten, and when they had a whole lot of them laid across the hole they covered them all over with dead leaves and grass. When they had finished, it looked as if there never had been any hole at all.

They then went to several rabbit nests Jack Rabbit knew about, and got a lot of rabbit fur. They took this fur and made it into a good-sized,



long body. This done, they went up near Farmer Roe's house and got a pair of jack rabbit's ears that the farmer's boy had thrown away. They belonged to a rabbit that had been unfortunate. They brought these ears down to the big tree and fixed them on the fur body they had made. Then Doctor Rabbit—because he was lighter than big Jack Rabbit—walked very, very carefully out on the leaves and sticks over the hole and laid down that make-believe jack rabbit.

Well, sir, you would have been surprised to see how much that did look like the real Jack Rabbit lying there. Doctor Rabbit said he really had to look at Jack Rabbit to make sure it wasn't he. Then they both laughed a great deal, they were so glad they had thought of this plan. But it was getting close to noon, and they hurried away and hid in a briar patch, where they could watch.

Doctor Rabbit and his friend Jack did not have to wait long. Suddenly Doctor Rabbit poked Jack Rabbit and told him to keep very still. They both looked. There was Tom Wildcat, creeping through the woods. He was coming very, very



cautiously and looking straight toward the tree where Jack Rabbit took his nap. When he got a little closer he crouched down almost flat to the ground. He jerked his tail from side to side and began creeping up more cautiously than ever, because he thought he saw Jack Rabbit lying there sound asleep.

Well, it surely was funny to see how badly slinky Tom was being fooled, and Doctor Rabbit and cheery Jack Rabbit could scarcely keep from laughing; but of course they didn't dare make a sound. Tom Wildcat would creep and crawl and stop and watch, then creep and crawl and stop and watch again, until finally he got right behind the tree. Then he crawled up the tree ever so carefully, from behind. Presently he was up to the long limb. Here he stopped and looked down and grinned, and looked as pleased as could be, and then he went crawling out on that limb, slowly and cautiously, until he was right over what he thought was Jack Rabbit.

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TOM WILDCAT HAS AN ACCIDENT

When Tom Wildcat had crawled out on the limb and got to the place from which he thought it would be best to jump, he stood up and grinned ever so broadly at what he considered his good fortune. Then down he jumped, and crash! he went right through those rotten sticks and into that deep hole!

Then Doctor Rabbit and Jack Rabbit ran out of the briar patch, and shouted and laughed and laughed. By and by Doctor Rabbit crept up to the hole and looked down on Tom Wildcat.

“Why, how do you do, Friend Tom? You must be digging a well to-day!” Doctor Rabbit said, as if he meant it.



Then Jack Rabbit came up to the hole and looked down, and said, "Well, well, our friend, Tom Wildcat! This is a pleasant day, isn't it, Tom? You seem to be making a dinner of rabbit fur; I notice you have a good deal down there!"

Tom ground his sharp teeth in anger and glared up at Doctor Rabbit and Jack Rabbit. Then suddenly he thought that if he acted pleasant, he might deceive them, and get out. He smiled up as politely as anybody, and said,

"Oh, I can get out easily, if I want to, but I'll always be the best of friends with you if you will just drop down that small log that I noticed up there by the tree. The fact is, I rather enjoy the joke; but now that we've had a good time, I know you won't mind slipping that log down end first. Then we can fix this hole up again, and play a good joke on some of our other friends." And Tom Wildcat smiled and looked so pleasant that it seemed as if he were as kind and good as anybody.



Crash! he went right through
... into that deep hole!



But Doctor Rabbit and Jack Rabbit just chuckled to themselves, and Doctor Rabbit said, “Oh, we won’t trouble ourselves with getting you the log, Smarty Wildcat. You can get out easily, if you want to!”

Then Doctor Rabbit and jolly Jack Rabbit both laughed right out loud, and Jack Rabbit said cheerfully, “No, Tom, we won’t bother about that log, because you can get out so easily if you want to!”

“Yes, of course he can!” laughed Doctor Rabbit. “Well, I hope you enjoy your juicy dinner of rabbit fur, Tom. You have a lot of it down there. Ha, ha, ha! Good day, Thomas!” And away went Doctor Rabbit and his friend Jack Rabbit to tell all their little woods neighbors about getting Tom Wildcat into a deep hole where he could not get out.

In a short time everyone knew what had happened, and that afternoon Tom Wildcat found out what all the little creatures of the Big Green Woods thought of him. When Blue Jay and Jenny Jay heard of it, they flew straight to the limb over



Tom's head and scolded him to their hearts' content. "He's a thief and a robber. He ate my eggs, and I hate him! I'll peck his eyes out!" Jenny Jay shouted.

"I hate him, too!" Chatty Red Squirrel barked out angrily from a limb overhead. "He's as mean as he can be! I hate him! I hate him!" Cheepy Chipmunk frisked up to the hole and away again, because he was afraid even to look at Tom Wildcat.

But all the time he was frisking back and forth, saucy Cheepy scolded as hard as he could. Stubby Woodchuck sat on a near-by stump and poured forth his scorn for Tom Wildcat. Jim Crow and Robin-the-Red threatened from the tree where they were perched, and all afternoon the little creatures of the Big Green Woods nagged old Tom and told him he was the ugliest and meanest person that ever lived.

After a while there were so many little creatures around the hole and in the tree over it, all scolding at the same time, that Tom Wildcat was about deafened with the noise. He put his paws



over his ears and ground his teeth in rage. Now and then Stubby Woodchuck slipped up to the hole and pushed a clod in on Tom's head, and then everyone shouted for joy. But once or twice Tom Wildcat jumped so high he nearly jumped out, and that scared everyone dreadfully.

After he sprang as high as he could and found he could not get out, he sat down in that hole and just growled and growled. The little creatures thought they had better be going then. For, even if Tom Wildcat was down in that hole, he might get out. And his growls! They were terrible; so they all scampered away.

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A BIG SURPRISE

All the little creatures surely were glad that Tom Wildcat had fallen down into the deep hole. They held a big meeting that night in Doctor Rabbit's front yard, and talked the matter over. While they talked, however, Doctor Rabbit sent Jack Rabbit to a place near the hole, "because," Doctor Rabbit said to his friends, "old Thomas is mighty cunning, and he might manage somehow to get out. And if he should happen to scramble out—well, he'd be pretty angry, and pretty hungry, too."

"Indeed he would!" gasped Stubby Woodchuck in a frightened whisper. "I believe I'll



go home this very minute!” And he did, as fast as his short legs would carry him.

“I think it’s about time I was in bed,” Cheepy Chipmunk said, and away he scampered to his stump.

That broke up the meeting, and every one of them hurried to his home. Pretty soon Jack Rabbit came hopping back to report to Doctor Rabbit. “He’s still in the hole,” Jack Rabbit said. “I don’t think he can get out. I have a long way to go before I reach home, and I guess I’d better be going. I told Mrs. Jack Rabbit I wouldn’t be out late. I’ll see you in the morning, Doctor.” And with that Jack Rabbit started off on a run, and went like a streak through the woods toward the Wide Prairie.

The next morning, a little after daylight, Doctor Rabbit was awakened by the loud, harsh cries of Blue Jay, just outside the upstairs window. Doctor Rabbit hurried out.

“He’s out and he’s gone!” Blue Jay shouted. “Tom Wildcat is out of that hole! I just came from there this minute!”



“He is?” Doctor Rabbit exclaimed in a frightened voice.

“Yes, sir, he is!” Blue Jay replied, all in a flutter of excitement.

Doctor Rabbit scratched his head in wonder. “I was just a little afraid of that,” he said half to himself, “because old Tom is certainly cunning; but I wonder how he got out.”

“Well,” said Blue Jay, “I looked into that hole pretty close, and I saw just how he managed it. He dug two holes in one side, where there were some small roots. Then he dug two more holes a little higher up. And then he dug two more a little higher up, and then he crawled up a little and dug two more holes, and so on till he got to the top. There was a good deal of loose dirt in the hole, and I’ve an idea that Tom must have fallen back quite a number of times before he finally reached the top. He must have had a mighty hard time of it. As like as not he had to work most of the night.”

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TOM WILDCAT INVITES
DOCTOR RABBIT TO DINNER

While Doctor Rabbit and busy Blue Jay were talking, Doctor Rabbit said suddenly, “Sh! keep still; there he is now!” And sure enough, there was Tom Wildcat just a little way off near a stump, where he had pounced upon an unfortunate mouse that happened to be passing that way, and gobbled him up.

Tom Wildcat did not know there was anyone around, so he smacked his lips and smiled very broadly. It was only a small breakfast—in fact, just about enough for dessert for greedy Tom, but he never was particular; he would just as soon



eat his dessert first as not. Indeed, I think he'd a little rather.

And now Tom came slipping along and looking for some signs of Doctor Rabbit. Then he happened to glance up and saw Doctor Rabbit looking from the upstairs window.

"Why, good morning, Doctor Rabbit!" he said in his most pleasing, company voice, just as if nothing had happened.

"Good morning to you, Tom." Doctor Rabbit said it as pleasantly as if he and Tom were the best of friends.

"It's a fine morning," wily Tom said, looking up and smiling; but all the while he was chuckling inwardly.

"It's a beautiful morning, just splendid. And I never saw you looking so fine," Doctor Rabbit said.

Well, sir, Tom Wildcat was actually deceived when Doctor Rabbit told him he looked so fine. He is such a vain fellow he believes anybody who tells him he is good-looking. That's one



thing Tom Wildcat will always believe, because he wants to believe it.

But he was not one bit deceived about anything else, for he remembered his recent experience in the hole.

Because old Tom is always trying to deceive others, naturally he sometimes deceives himself. He thought that by acting kind and polite to Doctor Rabbit he might fool him, and so get him for dinner. And it made his mouth water to look at Doctor Rabbit and think what a fine dinner he would make.

So he said gaily, "Well, we've had quite a good deal of fun lately; and ha, ha, ha! I've enjoyed it as much as anyone. In fact, I really like jokes, and I like you now better than ever, Doctor Rabbit. You're the smartest and most sociable person in the woods. Do come over to my house and take dinner with me. I'm going to have the loveliest green peas, and beans, and lettuce, and ever so many more of the sweetest vegetables you ever tasted!"

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O. POSSUM GETS SICK

When Tom Wildcat smiled and spoke about having all those nice vegetables for dinner, Doctor Rabbit knew well enough that he didn't ever eat any such things. No, sir; all Tom Wildcat wanted was Doctor Rabbit. But Doctor Rabbit was just as cunning as was Tom, so he said, "It's very kind of you to invite me over to dinner, Friend Tom, very kind, I am sure; but the fact is, I won't have time. I really am too busy."

"A good deal of sickness in the Woods, I suppose," Tom Wildcat said, as pleasantly as could be.

"Yes, quite a good deal," said Doctor Rabbit; "especially a good many accidents, lately." Tom Wildcat was so angry for a minute



that he almost forgot to smile. He knew what Doctor Rabbit meant by accidents. He meant Tom's getting his foot bitten by Farmer Roe's big dog, and his falling into that hole. But by very hard work, crafty Tom did manage to keep on smiling as he said, "Well, I shall have to be going on, then. Possibly you can come over some other time and take dinner with me. Good morning, Doctor Rabbit!" And Tom Wildcat trotted off.

When he had disappeared, Doctor Rabbit sat down in his big chair and laughed and laughed. It would have made anybody laugh to see how hard it had been for Tom Wildcat to smile when Doctor Rabbit spoke about so many accidents lately.

There was a great deal of excitement among the little creatures of the Big Green Woods now. It was bad enough to know that Tom Wildcat had come over from his hollow tree near the Deep River, but it was worse still to think that he had fallen into that hole and climbed out again.

Of course, they all had to go right on eating, because nobody can live without eating.



And there was where the little creatures were in great danger. They were generally hunting something to eat, and there was always someone like Tom Wildcat watching for them, ready to pounce upon them.

The next day Doctor Rabbit was called to see O. Possum, who was sick. Mandy Possum came over in a great hurry and said O. Possum was having a severe pain in his stomach. Doctor Rabbit got his medicine case and went over to the Possums' house with Mandy Possum as fast as he could.

Mandy said they would go in the nearest way, which was through the kitchen. She asked Doctor Rabbit to excuse her kitchen, as she had not had time to clean it up. Then as they went through the parlor, she told him to excuse that too, as she hadn't had time to clean that up. As they passed through two other rooms, she said to excuse them; she knew they were pretty dirty, but she had not had time to clean them up. But Doctor Rabbit didn't say anything, because no matter what time of day he came to Mandy



Possum's house, she always asked him to excuse the dirt, and always said she hadn't had time to clean it up. Man doctors sometimes find it that way, too.

Well, they finally came to O. Possum, who was off in a corner bedroom. He lay in bed with some turpentine and a hot stove lid on his stomach. He began to groan terribly when Doctor Rabbit came in. "Oh my, oh my," he groaned, "I know I'm going to die! Yes, I can feel it, and my wife wants me to die; she's got turpentine and a hot stove lid on my stomach, and I'm roasting alive. Oh dear! Oh dear!"



DOCTORING O. POSSUM AND STUBBY WOODCHUCK

As soon as he looked at O. Possum Doctor Rabbit knew positively that he was not seriously sick, for he had seen him like that several times before. Doctor Rabbit said, "Let me see your tongue," and O. Possum grunted and put his tongue out. It was badly coated. "I see!" said Doctor Rabbit, wisely. Then he examined his patient by thumping his chest and his stomach and his back, and finally said, "Friend Possum, what have you eaten lately?"

"Oh, I haven't eaten anything to speak of," O. Possum groaned. "Only a little piece of chicken."



“Mr. Possum, what have you
eaten lately?”



“Was that all?” asked Doctor Rabbit.

“Well, maybe I did eat two little pieces,” O. Possum groaned again. “But that was all.”

“He ate a little pudding, too, Doctor,” ventured Mandy Possum, timidly.

“How much?” Doctor Rabbit asked.

“Just the smallest bit,” O. Possum began, but Doctor Rabbit interrupted him with, “Exactly how much?”

“Oh, not more than a small bowl full.”

“I see! I see!” exclaimed Doctor Rabbit, smiling, and his bright eyes twinkled. “Your bowls all hold a quart, Brother Possum. A bowl of pudding, two big pieces of chicken, some pie and some cake, and a plate of dumplings Mrs. Possum had left over from yesterday!” And Doctor Rabbit laughed, while O. Possum looked very, very much surprised, because that was exactly what he had eaten, and he wondered how Doctor Rabbit could tell.

“Mr. Possum, what have you eaten lately?”

“The fact is,” Doctor Rabbit said, “you have been making a pig of yourself, and you have



acute indigestion. Here, Friend Possum; take this tablespoonful of medicine.”

O. Possum swallowed the medicine, and then coughed and choked, and said, “Whew! that’s the nastiest tasting medicine I ever swallowed. Mandy, my dear, I’ll have to trouble you for a drink of water.” After he had taken the water, he said he felt a great deal better.

“I can feel that medicine taking right hold,” he said. “Yes, sir, I can feel it, and I certainly am better.”

Doctor Rabbit looked with a wise glance over his glasses at Mandy Possum, and said, “Give him a tablespoonful of the medicine every hour until he has taken five doses; and he must not eat a thing for two whole days.”

“Now, that’s pretty tough,” sighed O. Possum. He was already thinking about a big fat hen that Mandy Possum was going to cook that very day. But O. Possum said he realized he would have to do what the doctor ordered, and that ended it.



Just then there was a knock at the door. Sophy Woodchuck was there to say that Doctor Rabbit was wanted at her house at once, for Stubby Woodchuck was feeling pretty poorly.

Well, when Doctor Rabbit got over to the Woodchucks' he found poor old Stubby in bed, and groaning just about the way O. Possum had been doing. And presently Doctor Rabbit found out Stubby's trouble was about the same as O. Possum's. He had gorged himself with too many nuts and other things he liked, until he had acute indigestion.

In fact, Doctor Rabbit had found out long before that most of the sickness among the little creatures of the Big Green Woods was due to the fact that they ate too much.

So Stubby Woodchuck had to take a bottle of terribly bitter medicine, and he too had to go two whole days without eating a bite. He said he felt better after he had taken the first dose of medicine; and Doctor Rabbit said that he would have to be going. First, however, he took three bottles of medicine from his case, mixed them all



together, and put them in one bottle. When it was mixed that way the medicine was terribly bitter, and Doctor Rabbit chuckled all the time. "I'm getting ready to throw this medicine right into Tom Wildcat's mouth if he gets after me," Doctor Rabbit explained, and then he slipped out of the door and went hoppity, hoppity, hoppity, as fast as he could go, toward home.

Now and then as he ran, Doctor Rabbit would stop and sit up and look and listen. He knew that every minute he must be watching out for Tom Wildcat.



STUBBY WOODCHUCK'S EXCITING ADVENTURE

In a few days O. Possum and Stubby Woodchuck were around again as usual, and one fine, bright morning Stubby went out for something to eat. Before he started, however, he got up on his stump and looked in every direction. He did not see anyone to be afraid of, so he concluded the first thing he would do would be to slip down to the Murmuring Brook for a nice fresh drink.

As he went along he stopped every now and then and looked back toward his stump, but everything seemed to be all right, and he went ahead. Then, when he had gone some distance, his heart suddenly seemed to come up in his



mouth, he was so frightened. He was sure he heard a slight noise a little way ahead, among some bushes; and he was sure he saw a crouching form.

Well, poor Stubby was in a pretty bad fix. He looked back at his stump. Then he shivered; his stump was ever so far away. He darted a swift glance around to see if there wasn't some hole handy, that he could run into.

All he could see was a small hole at the base of a tree a little way off. Stubby didn't know, of course, whether he could squeeze into that hole or not, but he decided he must run and try anyway. Away he started, as fast as his legs would go, and then he was frightened, for from behind those bushes came Tom Wildcat!

Stubby Woodchuck managed to reach the hole, but he was in a frenzy of fear. Try as he would, he couldn't squeeze into that small opening. The very next second Tom Wildcat pounced on him. Poor Stubby was so scared he could not speak. First Tom held him between his paws and glared at him. Then he picked him up in



his mouth and carried him out into an open space and set him down again. Stubby promptly started to run away, but Tom Wildcat just put his paw on him and pulled him back.

Old Tom did this exactly the way a cat sometimes plays with a live mouse before he gobbles him up.

“Well, young fellow,” Tom Wildcat said, with a terrible grin, “I guess I’ve got you at last.” Stubby Woodchuck lay on his side and panted and panted, he was so frightened; but he was glad he was still alive, and he thought he might still find some way of escape. Then all of a sudden he did think of something.

“Yes,” he said very weakly, “you’ve got me, Tom Wildcat; but I think when you know you’re going to die a little while after eating me, you’ll wish you hadn’t caught me.”

“Ha, ha, ha!” Tom Wildcat laughed. “Yes, I suppose I’ll die after eating you. Ha, ha, ha! Woodchuck is one of my favorite dishes. Ha, ha, ha!”



“Yes,” the clever Stubby said again, very weakly, “if I were healthy, that would be different, but I was poisoned a little while ago, and I was just going down for one last drink, so I could die in comfort!”

“What’s that?” exclaimed Tom Wildcat, jumping up with wide eyes and walking round and round Stubby Woodchuck. “How do you know you are poisoned?” he asked sharply.

“Because,” Stubby answered—and it sounded as if he were about gone—“because I was sick and Doctor Rabbit gave me the wrong medicine. He feels awfully bad about it, and said he could not bear to see me die!”



TOM WILDCAT GETS FRIGHTENED

While Tom Wildcat walked round and round Stubby Woodchuck, looking at him and getting more and more scared every minute, Stubby went right on talking. "Yes," he said very weakly, "Doctor Rabbit gave me the wrong kind of pills. His calomel pills and his strychnine pills all being white, he made a mistake, and gave me strychnine; and he did not find out until it was too late. Oh, dear me! I can't last long now. The poison is paining me terribly. Do eat me up quick, I beg of you! Eat me up quick! Yes, I can feel the poison working out through my skin; it is all through me and all over me!"



Well, sir, old Tom Wildcat had been surprised many times in his life, but this was the biggest surprise he had ever had. And he suddenly remembered he had had his mouth on Stubby Woodchuck. All this time Stubby kept one eye open just the smallest bit, so that he could watch the wily Tom.

When Stubby Woodchuck spoke about feeling the poison coming out on his skin, Tom Wildcat's eyes grew wide with fear, and he began to spit and spit, because he thought that Stubby was poisoned. Tom began to imagine he could taste something bitter in his own mouth. That's what happens sometimes when people get to imagining things. Tom Wildcat spit ever so many times to make sure to get all the poison out of his mouth.

After a while he said pretty low, and to himself, although sharp-eared Stubby heard, "My goodness! I believe I do feel a little queer myself! Sakes alive! I wonder if I am poisoned! Dear me! I wonder what I ought to do if I am! Maybe if I run



around real fast, and get warmed up, that will help me. Anyway I'll try it."

And away Tom Wildcat ran, round and round in a big circle. But he did not go far off, so Stubby just had to lie quite still.

At last Tom stopped. "Maybe climbing a tree would help me," he said, and away he went for a tree, then up into the tree; but he was right down again in no time, so Stubby Woodchuck could not move. Tom Wildcat was panting now, ever so hard. He came up and stood looking down at Stubby. Presently he said, "Well, I believe I'm feeling a little better, but I guess I'll wait around here a while and see if I get to feeling queer again."

Tom Wildcat then lay down, with his head between his paws, and was quite still for a long time.

After a while he stretched and yawned, and said, "Ho, hum," and rubbed his eyes. Now the very minute old Tom rubbed his eyes, he didn't have to imagine something hurt him; he knew it did—and I'll tell you what it was. You remember that



hot salve that Doctor Rabbit put on the foot the dog had bitten? Well, that hot salve keeps its strength for days and days, and when Tom Wildcat, not thinking, rubbed his eyes, he rubbed some of that hot salve right into one of them. It was in only one eye, but my! how that eye did burn! One eye was certainly enough. Tom Wildcat let out a yell that could be heard all over the Big Green Woods; and then before he thought, he rubbed his eye again, and of course he rubbed in some more hot salve.

Well, it got to smarting and burning so badly that it nearly set Tom Wildcat crazy. With both eyes shut, and yowling terribly, he began running in every direction. The first thing he ran into was a brush thicket; then he backed out of that and started again, and presently butted his head against a tree.

By this time he had forgotten all about Stubby and everything else except that smarting and burning in his eye.



TOM WILDCAT MAKES A DISCOVERY

When Tom Wildcat began running around with his smarting eye, Stubby looked up mighty quick to see whether there was any chance of his running away. You see, he had to be very, very careful now about trying to get away, because he probably would be safe if he lay there long enough.

“And still,” Stubby said to himself, “Tom Wildcat might fool around and watch me, and just keep on watching me, to see if I die; and then when he sees I don’t die, he might grow suspicious. And still,” he went on thinking, “if I should start to run, and old Tom should see me, then he would know I’m not poisoned, and he’d finish me sure!”



So you see it was pretty hard for Stubby Woodchuck to decide what to do. Of course, if he could have been sure he could get back to his home in the stump, he would have jumped up and gone in no time. However, after he had watched the queer actions of Tom Wildcat for a while, Stubby began to be a little bolder. He thought Tom Wildcat had surely gone crazy this time. Of course he knew about the hot salve on Tom's sore foot, but he had forgotten all about it; and even if he had remembered, he probably would not have thought that was what made the old villain tear around so.

Stubby Woodchuck was afraid, too, that since Tom Wildcat was acting so crazy, he might suddenly decide to make a meal even on a poisoned woodchuck. The more Stubby Woodchuck thought of this, the more frightened he was; and the next time Tom Wildcat ran into a thicket, and squawked, and began holding his paws over his eyes, Stubby bravely stood up. Then all of a sudden, right close by, Doctor Rabbit shouted, "Run, Brother Woodchuck! Run!



run!” And away went clumsy Stubby toward his stump. He thought he was done for once, when Tom Wildcat came in that direction; but Tom Wildcat did not see Stubby at all, and he got safely to his stump.

He ran in and fell down on the floor, panting so he could not speak. Sophy Woodchuck hurried around and brought out the camphor bottle. After Stubby Woodchuck had smelled the camphor a little, he was able to sit up in a chair and tell his wife what had happened.

Just as Stubby finished his strange story, Doctor Rabbit burst in, and how he did laugh about Tom Wildcat’s tearing around so! And Doctor Rabbit was so glad, too, that his friend Stubby had escaped.

Doctor Rabbit said, “I was out in my front yard when I heard those terrible yowls of Tom Wildcat’s, and I hurried over to see what the trouble was. When I saw old T. Wildcat rubbing his eye with his sore foot, I knew right away it was that hot salve. And as soon as I saw my friend



Stubby, I guessed what had almost happened to him.”

“What became of Tom Wildcat?” asked Stubby Woodchuck.

“Well, sir,” Doctor Rabbit said, “he finally ran over the bank and fell into the Murmuring Brook, head over heels. He crawled out as wet as any rat you ever saw. But I think the water helped his eye, for he didn’t rub it any more—just looked around as if he felt terribly ashamed, and hoped no one saw him. And then he slipped over to where you had been, Friend Stubby, and you should have seen and heard him! ‘Gone!’ he said. ‘And he’s made a fool of me. He wasn’t poisoned at all! But just wait until the next time, Stub Woodchuck! And that old fat Doctor Rabbit who helped him get away—I’ll attend to him. Indeed I will.’”

“Well,” added Doctor Rabbit, “I knew I could get home as easy as anything, because I had a good start; so I yelled out and said, ‘Ha! ha! ha! Tom Wildcat, I guess we can’t fool you! Ha! ha! ha! Oh, no, not at all! Ha! ha! ha! Good day, Mr. T.



Wildcat!’ Then I ran home so fast I know he didn’t
get more, than a glimpse of me.”

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DOCTOR RABBIT THINKS OF A NEW SCHEME

Sophy Woodchuck was very, very glad that her Stubby had come through his terrible adventure safely, but she said she would be troubled now as long as Tom Wildcat was around. “I certainly do wish we could think of some plan to get rid of him”, she said, and Doctor Rabbit chuckled.

“I have a plan, Mrs. Woodchuck,” he said. “It came to me only this morning, so you must give me a few days to get everything ready. And don’t you worry any more about Tom Wildcat being around. No, sir! Don’t you worry a bit! I’ve got an





idea, and pretty soon old Tom will go tearing out of these woods, and he'll stay out! Indeed he will! Ha, ha, ha!" And Doctor Rabbit laughed until his fat sides shook.

This made the Woodchuck family feel pretty fine, and it made them curious, too. They knew that Doctor Rabbit was very wise in a good many things, and especially wise in planning ways to get rid of a very bad enemy. They remembered how he had got rid of troublesome Ki-yi Coyote. Of course Doctor Rabbit's plan of getting rid of Tom Wildcat in that hole had failed; but we must admit it was a good scheme, anyway.

Well, of course the Woodchucks wanted to know right away what Doctor Rabbit's new scheme was, but he only chuckled, and said he would have to be going now to get things ready. "I'll need you and all our other friends and neighbors to help me," Doctor Rabbit said. "None of you will have to do very much, but what you do, you must do exactly right. Now I am going to slip around among our friends and get them to



promise to be ready at any time, and to do just what I tell them.”

“You certainly can count on us!” exclaimed Stubby and Sophy, in the same breath.

“I was sure of that,” Doctor Rabbit replied, and then bidding them a very good morning, he went swiftly away, hoppity, hoppity, to tell all the others.

In a short time all the little creatures of the Big Green Woods knew that Doctor Rabbit was working on a new scheme to get rid of Tom Wildcat. For several days Doctor Rabbit was mysteriously engaged in some kind of work at his house. He did not go out at all, except to Farmer Roe’s garden once or twice a day, to get some green peas to eat. And Doctor Rabbit would not say a word to anyone. He was surely busy.

Blue Jay and Jim Crow, and several others, came to Doctor Rabbit when he was in the pea patch one morning and wanted him to tell them what the scheme was; but he only laughed, and said he would have to be going right home, because he was so busy.



“Pretty soon I’ll be ready, and then I’ll tell you about it,” Doctor Rabbit said as he hurried away.

Finally, after a day or two, Blue Jay became so curious he could not wait any longer. So he hid in a tree near Doctor Rabbit’s house and watched. Perhaps Blue Jay ought not to have done this, but it seemed as if he just couldn’t wait. He hid in the tree and watched all day, but he did not see anything until along toward evening. Then he saw Doctor Rabbit open his kitchen door. He had in his hand a bucket of paint and a paint brush. But that was all that Blue Jay saw, for Doctor Rabbit wiped the sweat off his face and went back into the house, shutting the door behind him.

Well, that was a little news anyway, and busy Blue Jay slipped around and told what he had seen. Then all of the little creatures were curious. They couldn’t imagine what Doctor Rabbit was doing with that paint. Cheepy Chipmunk said perhaps Doctor Rabbit was going to paint himself all up terribly black, and scare



Tom Wildcat away. But the others said this could not be so, because Doctor Rabbit had had plenty of time to paint himself, if that was what he intended. “No,” Blue Jay said, scratching his head, “that’s not it. I can’t figure out what he’s doing.”



CHATTY RED SQUIRREL HAS AN ADVENTURE

Next day, while all the little creatures of the Big Green Woods were wondering just what Doctor Rabbit could be doing, Chatty Red Squirrel had an exciting time. It was a beautiful morning. The sun shone bright, and everything in the woods smelled so fresh and sweet that it was very fine to be out.

Chatty Red Squirrel was out, jumping about on the limbs of his tree and enjoying himself generally. He would frisk about first on one big limb, then on another, and every now and then he would bark a little. This was his way of laughing



sometimes when he was as glad to be alive as he was this morning.

Pretty soon Chatty Squirrel scrambled down his tree and went frisking around on the ground. Sometimes he would pick up an old worm-eaten nut and bite into it, and laugh, and throw it away. Then he would frisk around again, so fast that it would almost make anyone dizzy to look at him. And as sure as anything, some one was watching Chatty Squirrel, and watching him very closely, too. Not far away—just behind the nearest dogwood thicket, in fact—Tom Wildcat lay hiding and watching every movement that Chatty made. Old Tom was very hungry, and he believed here was a fine chance for a breakfast.

Now when Tom Wildcat hides in the woods, he can lie so still that unless you happen to look right at him you would never know he was there. And he can lie still so long you would think he couldn't stand it; but somehow he can, for that's his nature.

Tom Wildcat lay behind that thicket and watched for nearly an hour while Chatty Squirrel



played around and had a fine time—never thinking, of course, that Tom Wildcat was anywhere near.

Then at last Chatty started straight toward the thicket where Tom Wildcat lay. Tom crouched down close to the ground and got all ready to spring. He thought now surely he would get a breakfast. But after all he was the one who was the most surprised, for a little way off he heard some one cry out, “Run for your tree, Friend Chatty. Here’s Tom Wildcat!”

It was Doctor Rabbit who had shouted. He just happened to be passing that way to get a drink at the Murmuring Brook, and he couldn’t bear to see Chatty Red Squirrel get caught, just when he was having such a good time.

My! how frightened little Chatty was, and how he did run for his tree! As he went up the trunk Tom Wildcat sprang after him; but Chatty Red got away, and ran into his hole, high up in the tree. Tom Wildcat could not squeeze in there, he knew, so he didn’t try. He was terribly angry, and, seeing Doctor Rabbit, who had stopped to see if



Chatty Squirrel had escaped, started for him with a wild bound. Well, sir, Tom Wildcat ran so fast that before Doctor Rabbit could get away he felt a little of his tail pulled out. Then for a time there was an exciting race. It seemed as if Tom Wildcat ran twice as fast as usual, and Doctor Rabbit was kept dodging so often he couldn't get a start. But presently, when Doctor Rabbit made a sudden jump to one side, Tom couldn't quite stop in time, and he butted his head square against a tree.

Tom Wildcat yelled and started out after Doctor Rabbit harder than ever, and Chatty Squirrel, who was watching from his hole in the tree, laughed right out when he heard that loud yell.

Doctor Rabbit had a good start now, and, reaching his back door, he darted in, shut the door, and locked it. "My!" he exclaimed, when he was safe inside, "that certainly was a narrow escape for me! But I'm glad I happened along that way. If I hadn't, Chatty Squirrel would have been caught sure enough. I'll attend to T. Wildcat!" And Doctor Rabbit began laughing to himself again.



“Yes, sir,” he said, “I certainly will attend to him, and that before very long, too. Ha! ha! ha!” Doctor Rabbit laughed and laughed every time he thought about the fine new scheme he was going to use just as soon as he could get ready. Once Doctor Rabbit thought he would tell one or two of his friends so they could help him with his plan. But at last he decided it would be best for him to do it all himself. Then it would not be possible for Tom Wildcat to find out the least thing about Doctor Rabbit’s secret.

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O. POSSUM'S FUNNY MISTAKE

After Stubby Woodchuck had nearly lost his life, and after Chatty Red Squirrel had nearly lost his life, all the little creatures of the Big Green Woods were greatly excited. When things like this happen to them, they talk about nothing else for a time.

When they went out of their homes every morning for something to eat, they were in constant fear of Tom Wildcat. One day Cheepy Chipmunk said he was not getting more than half enough food, because he had to spend most of his time watching out. Blue Jay said it was the same in his case. He said that every time he started to pull a worm out of the ground he had to stop several times and look around. And



sometimes, he said, the worm would crawl back into the ground before he could get it.

Once, Blue Jay said, when he was pulling a big worm from the ground for Jenny Jay, he thought he heard a noise behind him, and he stopped and looked around. When he turned back again, Robin-the-Red had pulled the worm out and gone away with it. After gobbling the worm, Robin came back and explained that he had been having so much bad luck in getting worms himself lately that he was about starved.

Blue Jay had accepted the apology, but he didn't feel very good even at that. He said, "All right for this time, Mr. Robin, but hereafter I'll thank you to let my worms alone." I don't think we can blame Blue Jay for being a little cross with Robin-the-Red; but they both understood, because when Blue Jay got a chance, he did the very same thing with Robin.

Then O. Possum had a little trouble, too. One morning he came running in at the door of his stump and laid something down before Mandy Possum.



“Well!” shouted O. Possum, “here’s a nice fat chicken for you, Mandy Possum! I guess we won’t starve if Tom Wildcat is prowling around.”

Mandy Possum went up to the chicken and turned it over. Well, sir, it proved to be nothing but an old dried-up head and a pair of chicken wings that had been lying in the farmer’s garden about a year.

“Humph!” exclaimed Mandy Possum, in great disgust. “Humph, you call that a big fat hen, do you, Mr. Possum? You grabbed it so quick and ran so fast,

you thought it was a big fat hen. Ha, ha, ha!” Mandy Possum laughed. “Tom Wildcat has certainly got on your nerves. Ha, ha, ha!”

Then O. Possum looked and saw the mistake he had made. “Huh!” was all he could say, he was so ashamed. And as he slipped out of doors he mumbled to himself, “I’ll get a live one.” Then, after he had sat out in the sun for a little while he began laughing all to himself. “That was a pretty good joke on me! It surely was,” O. Possum



said, and he found himself enjoying the joke about as much as Mandy Possum had done.

Well, the next morning Doctor Rabbit slipped around pretty early and told his friends he was ready with his scheme. He carried a big bundle of signs, all painted with the finest black letters, and he tacked up a sign on the front door of the home of each of his friends and neighbors. The little creatures were all surprised, and how they did admire Doctor Rabbit for his cleverness! They said that no one in the world but Doctor Rabbit could have thought of such a fine scheme, and they were very sure that Tom Wildcat would soon receive the surprise of his life.



TOM WILDCAT
DECIDES TO MAKE A VISIT

When Doctor Rabbit had all his signs tacked up on the front doors, the homes of the little creatures of the Big Green Woods certainly presented a funny sight. That is, it was funny to Doctor Rabbit and his friends, but it would not be funny to Tom Wildcat when he saw those signs; I should say not! And now Doctor Rabbit was all ready for Tom Wildcat to come over from his home in the hollow tree near the Deep River.

For several mornings old Tom had come over to the Big Green Woods pretty early; but after he had had such bad luck in letting Stubby Woodchuck and Chatty Squirrel get away, he decided not to come for a time. He thought



perhaps they would forget about him, and then he could slip in suddenly and surprise them.

Meanwhile he was fortunate in pouncing upon a foolish young chicken that had strayed from the farmer's barnyard and gone too near the Deep River.

The next morning Tom Wildcat was fortunate again. A big, fat woodrat, that had been over to Farmer Roe's feasting on a very young chicken, was hurrying back home when he ran too close to the tree where Tom Wildcat lived. You may be sure Tom gobbled up that woodrat in a hurry.

Afterward he smacked his lips and said, "That reminds me that I haven't been over to the Big Green Woods for several days. Probably by this time those people over there have forgotten all about me. I'll just pay them a visit this very day. What I really need now is rabbit, and blue jay, and woodchuck, and things of that sort. One gets rather tired of chicken and rat. Yes, I need a change in diet, and I'll just slip over and pay my friends a visit. They have not invited me, but I'll slip over anyway, just to be friendly," and sly old



Tom smiled until he showed all of his very sharp teeth. He was surely pleased at the thought of stealing into the Big Green Woods again. And his sore foot was now entirely well.

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TOM WILDCAT
IS GREATLY SURPRISED

After Doctor Rabbit had tacked up the signs, of course all the little creatures of the Big Green Woods were on the lookout for Tom Wildcat. They were sadly disappointed when he did not come right away. Stubby Woodchuck said he was afraid Tom Wildcat had seen the signs and gone away, and that they had missed the fun of seeing him run; but Doctor Rabbit said he was sure that Tom had not been over since the signs were tacked up. He said that Blue Jay and Jenny Jay had taken turns and watched constantly, and that they had not found the least track of him.

“He’ll be over again; don’t you ever think he will not,” Doctor Rabbit told



his friends, and continued, "He's just taking his meals somewhere else to fool us. Likely enough he's been paying some more visits to the farmer's chicken roosts; and about the time he thinks we have forgotten all about him, he'll be over here. You just watch and see!"

Well, the very day that Tom Wildcat said he believed he would go over to the Big Green Woods, he did go. Yes, sir, he went; and with his mouth just watering for Stubby Woodchuck and several others. It so happened that he did not go the way he usually went. He thought he would slip in by another way, and surprise one or two of the little creatures.

In fact, he came slipping in the back way, and so did not see any of the signs on the front doors until he slipped around in front of the Woodchucks' house.

Now as sly as Tom Wildcat had been, he had not been sly enough for Blue Jay and Jenny. They saw him coming; so they flew around quickly and told Doctor Rabbit and then all the other little creatures.



All the little creatures
hurried out to watch him



Tom Wildcat read the sign on Stubby Woodchuck's door, and this is what it said:

Cat Cholera Here! Come In and Help!

Well, sir, you should have seen Tom's glarey eyes when he read that sign! They almost popped out of his head, he was so scared. And then, just a little distance away, he read exactly the same thing on the Chipmunks' door; and there was Cheepy Chipmunk, just outside his door, acting mighty queer. You see, Cheepy Chipmunk had been watching, and now he did exactly what Doctor Rabbit had told him to do. Little Cheepy acted terribly sick, and leaning up against his front door, where the sign was, he said loud enough so that Tom Wildcat could hear, "Oh, dear me; I'm so sick, and it's awful to have to die with this old cat cholera! But anyway I hope Tom Wildcat gets it and dies from it. But I suppose he got it long ago, and is dead by this time. Yes, I suppose it was he who brought it over and gave it to us. Oh, it's terrible!" And then Cheepy sank down to the ground and certainly looked as if he were breathing his last. Just then Mrs. Cheepy did



what Doctor Rabbit had told her to do. She came staggering out of the house and fell down right beside Mr. Cheepy on the ground.

“Oh, this cat cholera is awful, and we are all going to die—I know we are!” she groaned—and she acted as if she were about gone.

Well, sir, when old Tom read those signs, and when he heard what the Cheepy Chipmunks said and saw how they acted, he certainly was scared. I should say he was scared! He was more scared than he had ever been in his life. You see, there is nothing in the whole wide world that Tom Wildcat is so much afraid of as cat cholera. He knew well enough that if he got that disease he wouldn't last long. So it is no wonder that he was scared.

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TOM WILDCAT
BECOMES FRIGHTENED

When Tom read those signs on Stubby Woodchuck's and Cheepy Chipmunk's doors, and when he saw how very sick the Chipmunks acted, he started away from there that very minute. His big green eyes were very wide, and he kept looking back toward Cheepy Chipmunk's house, so that he did not notice where he was going, and the first thing he knew he bumped right into O. Possum's house. And there on O. Possum's door was a big sign in black letters reading,
Cat Cholera Here!
Come In and Help!



O. Possum's door was closed, but poor scared Tom heard a terrible groan inside.

You see, O. Possum had been looking out of his window and had seen Tom Wildcat coming. It was hard to groan when he did so want to laugh.

Of course Tom jumped away from O. Possum's house in a hurry, and with eyes wider than ever, started to get out of the woods in another direction. He kept looking back toward O. Possum's house, and pretty soon he ran against Chatty Squirrel's house, and there was another of those terrible signs:

Cat Cholera Here!

Come In and Help!

Well, Tom Wildcat jumped back about scared stiff, and started off in another direction. This time he ran. But again he kept looking back at the signs and forgot to look where he was going. The first thing Tom Wildcat knew, he ran plump against Doctor Rabbit's house; and then he surely was more surprised and frightened than ever. Because on Doctor Rabbit's front door was one of those same terrible signs:



Cat Cholera Here!

Come In and Help!

This was simply awful. “And so,” Tom Wildcat said in a trembling voice, “Doctor Rabbit has that dreadful disease too, and not even all his medicine can keep him from dying!” At the very thought, he let out a most terrible yell, and away he started out of those woods. And this time he did not look back. No, sir, he looked straight ahead; and how he did run and yell, he was so frightened!

The farther Tom Wildcat ran the more frightened he became, and after a while he was going through those woods like a streak. Yes, sir, Tom Wildcat was terribly frightened; and he had his mind made up that he knew mighty well what he was going to do if he ever got out of those woods alive!

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TOM WILDCAT
MOVES HASTILY

Kit Wildcat had just swept the upper part of her house and was coming down stairs, when she heard Tom Wildcat tearing through the brush and yelling like a madman.

Kit Wildcat ran out into the yard and shouted, "Sakes alive, Tom Wildcat, have you gone plumb crazy, or what in the world is the matter with you?"

But Tom Wildcat didn't stop; he came right on and yelled as loud as he could. "Crazy nothing! I'm not crazy, but I'd rather be crazy than get cat cholera! Come right this minute, Kit Wildcat, this very minute! I'm going clear away from this place,



and never come within ten miles of it again! Hurry, Kit! Hurry! Hurry! Hurry!”

“Who’s got it?” shrieked Kit Wildcat, now very badly scared.

“Everybody!” shouted Tom wildly. “Cheepy Chipmunk, and Stubby Woodchuck, and Doctor Rabbit himself has it, and is dying with it this very minute!” Then Tom Wildcat said, “I had gone clear into those woods before I discovered the trouble. On every door there’s a cat cholera sign, asking anyone who passes to come in and help; but I can tell you, Kit Wildcat, I didn’t go in and help. Why, I saw Cheepy Chipmunk come out and fall down and die, and then I saw his wife come out and die; and I know everyone in the Big Green Woods must be dead by this time, because you know what cat cholera is. Come on,” Tom Wildcat ended suddenly, “I’m going!” and away he started, without even waiting for Kit Wildcat.

“Wait until I get my coat!” Kit shouted.

“I won’t wait for anything!” old Tom called back, and away he ran. Well, Kit Wildcat was so



scared she did not try to get her coat, but just started off right after Tom.

When Tom Wildcat started out of the Big Green Woods yelling so loudly, all the little creatures hurried out to watch him. After a while they could not see old Tom any more, although they could hear him and Kit Wildcat yelling and running away up the river. But busy Blue Jay flew over the trees and watched. And after a long time he came back and said Tom and Kit Wildcat were still running up the river, and that he had heard them both say they knew of a woods about twenty-five miles away, and that they would go there and live.

When Blue Jay delivered his message, all the little creatures were gathered together at Doctor Rabbit's house. How Doctor Rabbit did laugh! "I just knew I could fool old Tom Wildcat; and if I fooled Tom Wildcat, I knew we'd get rid of Kit Wildcat, too. Ha! ha! ha!" Then Doctor Rabbit said, "Do come in now, my friends. I have a splendid meal all ready for you."



So the little creatures went in and ate about all they could hold. It certainly was fine to know that they could eat in so much comfort, and that Tom Wildcat had been driven out of the Big Green Woods forever.

THE END



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